

## Checking whether your V8 inlet manifold to carburettor adaptor (the "pair of trousers") is fitted with a blanking screw



The vacuum gauge is similar to using a rev counter for mixture setting but I think a bit more sensitive. Generally tune for highest vacuum or a tad richer. Kicks of the needle indicate a slight weakness while wavering indicates richness. You can pick up a vacuum gauge for a fiver at an auto-jumble. The RH photo is my "pair of trousers" (POT) with my normal use blanking plug in place, highlighted in blue. Use the vacuum gauge connected to a drilled through substitute blanking screw for tuning adjustments then replace the pukka blanking screw for normal use.

Unfortunately, from my queries to other owners it would seem that this blanking screw is not standard although the boss/land is cast and machined ready for it but the tapped hole is blind (LH photo). I must have drilled this through and tapped it in the dim and distant past (the two previous owners of my car wouldn't have done it as one was a doctor's wife and the other a rich American widow). So unfortunately it's not as straightforward as it might be since the POT needs to be removed for drilling and tapping otherwise you would get swarf in the engine. It's not a big job IF the studs were properly lubricated the last time it was assembled:

Remove the fuel feed, the flame trap hoses, the air cleaner feeds, the breather pipe at the rear of the air box and the float chamber overflow pipes. Undo the choke cable clamp at the air box and the throttle cable bar at the POT, finally remove the POT fixing nuts then lift the whole assembly off the studs (hopefully!!) and forward a bit. Now you can get at the nuts to release the POT from the carbs. Now drill a 3/16" pilot hole through the centre of the blind hole. Turn the POT over and open the 3/16" hole out to 17/64". Now put a 5/16" UNF tap through from the outside, giving you a thru tapped hole. Clean off the swarf and sharp edges. On replacement you'll need to clean off the mating faces and smear them with new liquid gasket (eg Hylomar) - and lubricate the studs with grease or a more sophisticated thread sealant (suitable for aluminium alloy to steel interfaces) to ensure it will be easy next time. The blanking screw is 5/16" UNF (1/2" AF) and you'll need one 7/16" long. You may have to cut down a longer one and clean up the cut end and thread edge. The blanking screw will need a 5/16" copper or fibre sealing washer.

In reality you are only setting the adjacent carburettor by vacuum and using the gauge like a rev counter for the second carburettor since the vacuum tracts for each carburettor are separate.